

RI Prekindergarten Program 2013 – 2014 LOI Questions

1. How does the bid work and what are the requirements?

Answer: The Rhode Island Department of Education anticipates making individual grant awards in accordance with the school funding formula per child allocation. Awards will not exceed \$167,000.00 per classroom per year. This reflects the potential cost of operating a full-day (minimum of 6 hours), high quality program for 18 children for a minimum of 180 days per year.

The award process will consist of two stages. An application will be required from all interested bidders. Applications will be reviewed by a technical review committee. Selected applicants will participate in budget planning sessions with RIDE and other entities to be determined by RIDE. During this session, selected applicants will work with RIDE to develop an appropriate program budget for the Pre-Kindergarten Program classroom. Once the budget is finalized, RIDE will complete the contracting process with each applicant.

All eligibility requirements are detailed within the posted RI Prekindergarten Program Letter of Interest (LOI) on the RIDE website at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/EarlyChildhoodEducation/Programs.aspx>

2. Can the range for salaries and benefits within a proposed budget be considered together? For example, if an applicant submits a budget with combined salaries & benefits in the requested range (61-73%), but the salaries are slightly lower than the salary range and the benefits are higher than the benefits range, would this budget be acceptable?

Answer: Salaries and benefits are considered separate budget items. Interested applicants must compensate all Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program teachers and teaching assistants with a competitive salary and benefits based on their credentials, experience, and past performance. The LOI offers the following ranges for percentages of budget allocated to each category as guidance:

Category	Range
Salaries for teacher and teacher asst.	45-55%
Benefits for teacher and teacher asst.	16-18%
Instructional Supplies	2-4%
Meals and Snacks	8-10%
Facilities	3-5%
Non-Instructional expenses	1-3%
Administration	3-5%

3. The RFP requires that the open house take place between July 10 and July 26, 2013, before the contract becomes effective (in August 2013). Is that correct? Would it be possible for contracts to become effective on July 1 so that Pre-K staff can be paid for participating in the open houses?

Answer: Open houses are required to take place between July 10 and July 26, 2013. Due to state fiscal timelines we are unable to contract with vendors prior to August 2013. This process does not prohibit qualified grantees from compensating staff through other means.

4. Is RIDE providing and paying for the TSG training in August or do we need to provide training to our staff and include the costs within our budget? The RFP states: "Applicants must...be prepared to participate in state Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) assessment system training in August 2013, and then implement the TSG child assessment system within the Pre-Kindergarten program."

Answer: RIDE will provide Teaching Strategies GOLD staff trainings in August 2013. The cost of the training should not be included in your proposed budget.

5. Page 8 of the LOI states that proposals should include "1. A completed and signed RI Pre-Kindergarten Program General Application (see Appendix)." There are budget forms in the Appendix, but the General Application seems to be missing. Is this piece of the application available elsewhere?

Answer: The RI Prekindergarten Program General Application was not posted at the time the LOI was posted. The General Application is now posted on:
<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/EarlyChildhoodEducation/Programs.aspx>

6. Is there any restriction to one organization running more than one Pre-K classroom?

Answer: Organizations may apply to operate more than one RI Prekindergarten classroom. However, while many of the elements in the Technical Proposal focus on program components, there are elements which will be different for each classroom proposed. Therefore, separate applications must be submitted for each classroom.

7. Do we need to have a firm location prior to submitting the RFP? We are currently working with another organization to try to acquire a space within that building, but as of now we do not have a firm arrangement. They are currently in the process of working on the proposal and if the arrangements all work out we will have access to the building by July.

Answer: Qualified grantees must demonstrate their ability to meet Tier I and II RI Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards, including evidence of meeting one of the following core levels of approval for early childhood programs:

- A community-based program licensed by the State of Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families;
- A public school approved through BEP Regulations and/or Special Education Regulations;
- A private school (PK-12) approved through the Rhode Island Department of Education's RIDE Private School standards; OR
- A special education school approved through the Rhode Island Department of Education's RIDE Special Education School standards and Special Education Regulations.

Additionally, evidence must be provided in the application that the potential grantee can meet all requirements of the RI Prekindergarten Program LOI, including holding open houses between July 10 and July 26, as part of the state outreach and recruitment process. Priority will be given to programs which demonstrate the capacity to meet these requirements.

If for some reason the space does not work out are we able to remove our application?

Answer: Applicants are able to remove their applications from consideration at any time in the review process.

8. Just wondering if we would qualify for any funds from this program to expand our PreK program by 10 slots. We are planning to drop our Toddler program in the fall, in turn we will open PreK slots in what was the Toddler room. This would be a classroom of older 4's and young 5's etc.

Answer: The RI State Prekindergarten Program LOI outlines a specific scope of work which includes maintaining active enrollment of 18 children who are age 4 by September 1, per classroom, using the state-supervised lottery to determine enrollment. Additional competitive factors listed include the applicant's ability to open a new state-funded Pre-K classroom without displacing current families.

9. What is the difference between RI Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Approval and the RI State Prekindergarten program?

Answer: The RI Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Approval is based on *program standards* that are voluntary; recognizing early care and education programs which meet high quality standards, reflecting current research and changing trends, that insure that each child enrolled in the preschool setting will develop his/her potential to the fullest and for each to enjoy the benefits of a safe and healthy learning climate.

The RI State Prekindergarten Program supports the goal of building and sustaining the expansion of a diverse *delivery system* of high-quality, state-funded Pre-Kindergarten programs across the state. The Rhode Island Funding Formula for aid to education includes an expansion plan for the Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program, increasing the state investment each year for 10 years by up to \$10 million per year.

All RI State Pre-Kindergarten Program classrooms must demonstrate compliance with Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Approval within the first funded grant year.

10. Are these proposals going to be limited to programs willing to provide the 18:1:1 model from the first round or will there be flexibility for programs like the Livingston Center Preschool to propose a model for an integrated classroom with intensive supports?

Answer: Grantees must demonstrate evidence of being able to meet all deliverables within the RI State Prekindergarten Program LOI. This includes but is not limited to: maintaining staff to child ratios of 1:9 with qualified teaching staff, selecting children using the state-supervised lottery to determine enrollment, and meeting both foundational (Tier I) and comprehensive (Tier II) levels within RI Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Approval standards.

11. Does my entire program need to be in compliance with licensing?

Answer: Yes, your whole program needs to be in compliance with DCYF licensing.

12. Can I submit my application early?

Answer: Yes, applications can be submitted early to RIDE. Please bring 1 original and 5 copies of your application to:

RIDE

Shepard Building

255 Westminster Street, 4th Floor

Providence, RI

Drop off available between 8 am and 4 pm, Monday through Friday.